

Student Work

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Boasting in the Lord

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Boasting in the Lord

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January 29, 2017

Tori Mann

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 15](#)

[Micah 6:1-8](#)

[Matthew 5:1-12](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#)

| *“Let the person who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

When we are little, we are taught not to brag. Why? Because it’s annoying, for starters. But more importantly, because it is a symptom of pride. It is a call for people to admire me as much as I admire me. By teaching us not to brag, our parents taught us to not always seek praise for ourselves.

Bragging can also show a misplaced value in something. When we boast about something, we do so because we think it is valuable and therefore worth boasting about. As adults, we can be subtler in our boasting than children, but we, nonetheless, are proud in places where we should be humble.

Despite the efforts of our parents, Paul tells us that there is, in fact, a condition under which we can brag (or boast): we can boast if we boast in the Lord.

Boasting in the Lord is, on the one hand, quite the opposite of boasting in one’s self. Instead of drawing attention to ourselves, we draw attention to Christ. This boasting is a call for people to admire him as much as we admire him. We are seeking praise—for Christ’s worth.

On the other hand, boasting in the Lord is quite the same as boasting in one’s self. It shows how much we value Christ—he is our best quality.

Boasting in the Lord is actually quite hard for us to do. It requires us to be in a state of humility in ourselves but pride in Christ—a tension unnatural to us. But Paul has already addressed the issue. In his time, he knew that Christians didn’t generally boast in the Lord, and he knew why.

“Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...”

Paul knew that Christ was not what most people wanted to hear; in fact, he is not what we, believers, want to hear, often. We want to morph the Biblical Christ into one that is less poignant, less holy, less God. In other words, we have our own ideas about what Christ should be. But God does not call us to boast in a Christ of our own making; first, he calls us to humility by giving us a Christ that does not make sense to the world.

If we back up in the passage, we will see that Paul has just quoted Isaiah, saying that God will “destroy the wisdom of the wise.” God himself is calling us to find our pride and joy not in our understanding of Christ, but in *his* Christ! In his Christ that was crucified. Crucified for our sins. This Christ is foolish and repugnant to the world because they cannot see that they are sinful and perishing!

The Jews and the Greeks both thought they had it together. The Jews were the people of God, just waiting for the Messiah to sweep away all the pagan nations. The Greeks were civilized philosophers who reasoned through every

new idea. Neither of them could possibly miss the truth.

They, like us, boasted. They did not boast in the Lord; rather, they boasted in what they thought they were and what they thought they had. They were proud of who they were and of their positions in society and of their great knowledge.

But after looking at these verses, we realize the kind of people that God called: “Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.”

So why did God choose the poor and the foolish? “He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”

Ouch. We cannot look at this passage and find any sort of joy unless we are truly humble.

From the beginning, Paul has been showing us that we must be in a state of humility. He says that the power of God is only recognized “*by those who are being saved*.” In other words, we must see that we are completely destitute before God when we come to face his holiness and wrath. We must see that Christ and his cross are the only way we could be saved, in order to see that through him God is showing his power and wisdom.

“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’”

Let us boast in Christ—showing how much we value and love him and seeking praise for his worth.